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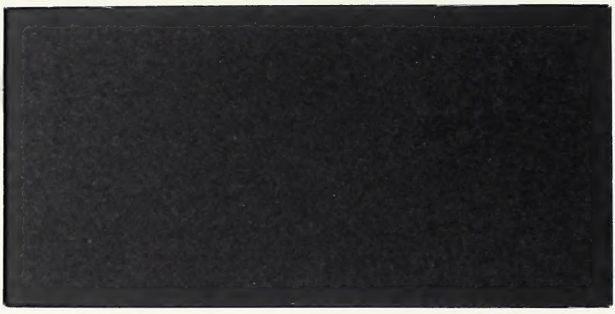
MODULE IV WORKBOOK
INFORMATION INTERVIEWS



Alberta

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

CANADIANA

MAY 28 1991

MODULE IV WORKBOOK
INFORMATION INTERVIEWS

In this module you will complete your occupational research by learning the skills necessary to conduct an information gathering interview.

Turn the tape on when you are ready.

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INFORMATION GATHERING INTERVIEW

Once you have completed your paper research, you can start working on information interviews.

A wealth of information can be obtained from the horse's mouth ... or the doctor's mouth, or the travel agent's, manager's or engineer's mouth. This is the idea behind an information gathering interview. It offers you an "on the spot" look at people doing what you think you'd like to be doing and allows you to investigate the diversity of specialties in any given career (by all means, talk to more than one horse).

Why Do An Information Gathering Interview?

1. To get valuable information for your job hunting and career planning.
2. To do a reality check on what you've read, heard, and thought of.
3. To gather information that when compared to many other sources is:
   (a) more up-to-date;
   (b) more specific and related to the local situation;
   (c) more personal and subjective;
   (d) more reflective of the "on-the-job" atmosphere.
4. To gain self confidence and learn the process of taking comfortable, assertive control in job hunting and interviewing settings.
5. To "enlarge your circle of expert contacts"; to get more referrals and make your own contacts.
6. To establish the first link to your (eventual) job targets.

What Is An Information Gathering Interview Versus Job Hunting Interview?

An information gathering interview, like a job-hunting interview, is just a more formal two-way conversation. It's different from a job hunting interview in:

1. Control: The balance of control is in your favor. You know what information you want and what the questions are.
2. Purpose: Obviously they're not interviewing you for a job (not now at least), but you are making that crucial first impression.
3. Pressure: Less on you and on them. The spotlight is focused on their expertise and your interest in that expertise.

Practice Field Survey

If you feel hesitant about conducting an information gathering interview with a stranger, why not practice interviews with someone who shares a common interest, enthusiasm or involvement in some activity?

For example, you may decide to interview your tennis partner or someone who shares your interest in politics. You'll find that the practice field survey is really a lot of fun. You need only ask the following questions:

How did you become interested/involved in this activity?
What do you like about it?
What don't you like about it?
Can you refer me to someone else who shares our interest in this activity?

Once you feel comfortable with this type of interview, you can go one step further. Contact people who:

1. Work in settings you like (e.g., hospitals, politics, big business, airlines) ... or
2. Work in career areas you're interested in (e.g., counselling psychologist, market researcher, criminal lawyer) ... or
3. Work in specific jobs in specific organizations (e.g., counselling psychologist at University Counselling Center, criminal lawyer at Legal Aid Office, market researcher at IBM).

Where To Find These People?

Ask friends, family, neighbors, work colleagues ... anyone you know. Contact faculty, college advisors, and counsellors, other University and College offices.

Call community service agencies and trade organizations (e.g., Rotary Club, Business and Professional organizations, Women's Organizations, Chamber of Commerce).

Yellow Pages.

Remember, people are generally interested in talking about what they do and how they do it. In fact, you may have ideas that will be interesting to them. But don't waste their time or your time ... be prepared!

Being prepared means: Know exactly what kind of information you want. Generally, don't ask something routine that is readily available elsewhere. First check out the information in the Occupational Profiles and the Catalogue of Occupations in the Alberta Public Service. Know your own interests, skills, values, and how they relate to the person you're interviewing.

How To Arrange The Interview?

Personal referral is the most effective. Have a mutual acquaintance be the bridge for your contact.

Walk in or phone calls are the next best routes if you don't have a personal referral.

Letters seldom work unless they include a personal referral and follow-up by telephone.

Follow Up

Always follow up with a thank you note. In it, you might want to reiterate information that you found particularly interesting or helpful. Also, keep a record of names, dates, comments, and referrals. It may be useful to include your resume with your thank you note. Ask for comments on your resume and that it be referred to possible interested persons.

Sample Questions

Pick out four or five questions for the information gathering interview. The idea is to ask about those things that are important to you and let the conversation flow naturally, while making sure you get the information you require.

1. How did you get into this work? How did you get started in this job?
2. How did you prepare yourself for this job? How did you prepare yourself for this profession?
3. What classes or projects can I do to prepare myself for this career area? What is the most valuable thing you learned in college/university related to this career?
4. Knowing what you know now, would you take the same job again? Why or why not?
5. What do you like most about it? What do you like least about it? What do you find most rewarding about your work?
6. What skills or personal qualities are necessary in this career?
7. What do you do in a typical day?
8. What type of people do you work with?
9. What are other specialties in this career area? (Get referrals, if appropriate).
10. How do you feel when you're at your job? Are there high times, low times?
11. What is your project (or organization) trying to accomplish?
12. Would you advise young people to enter this career area? Why or why not?

13. What, in your opinion, is the job outlook in this career area? What will affect its growth or decline?

14. Where else could I find people involved in this activity and in places I would not have thought of? What other settings or industries do, (e.g., accountants) work in? (Get referrals, if appropriate).

Go ahead now and prepare your personalized questions and decide who you want to contact for more information. Remember the idea is not to ask questions of people when the information is available in print form. The purpose is to get more up to date information and more personal/subjective information.

Once you have finished your researching you may want to access other books from our Career Planning Centre. At this point you may be interested in some of the following: The Adult Back-To-School Book; Financial Assistance for Alberta Students; It's About time; and/or Changing Course: Mid Stream.

Your homework assignment is now to complete the research on your chosen jobs/ occupations of interest. Don't hesitate to call your Career Planning Consultant for more information or clarification.

Once you have all your researching done, you will be ready to call for MODULE V, DECISION-MAKING AND ACTION PLANNING.

REMEMBER TO RETURN YOUR AUDIO-CASSETTE TAPE TO YOUR CAREER PLANNING CONSULTANT. ONCE IT HAS BEEN RECEIVED, MODULE V WILL BE SENT TO YOU.